



State of Utah

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NEWS RELEASE

August 22, 2005

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Attachment: See accompanying attachment for more information

Health Officials Issue Fish Advisories For Two Southern Utah Waters

Salt Lake City — Fish consumption advisories have been issued in two Utah areas by state and local officials. The advisories are in effect for Gunlock Reservoir in Washington County, and Mill Creek in Grand County where elevated mercury levels have been found in fish.

Fish consumption advisory signs will be posted at access points to Gunlock Reservoir and Mill Creek stating that:

- Adults should limit their consumption of largemouth bass taken from Gunlock Reservoir to no more than two 8-ounce servings per month
- Adults can safely eat three 8-ounce meals of brown trout from Mill Creek per month, and
- Women who may become pregnant, pregnant women, nursing mothers, and young children should not eat more than one 4-ounce serving per month from either location. A 4-ounce serving of fish is approximately the size of a deck of cards.

Eating more than these amounts over a long period of time could result in an intake of mercury that exceeds the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency health recommendations, according to an analysis completed by the Utah Department of Health. Any health risks associated with eating fish from Gunlock Reservoir or Mill Creek are based on long-term consumption and are not tied to eating fish occasionally. There is no health risk to other recreationists, including those swimming, boating, and waterskiing.

Fish were collected from Gunlock Reservoir (near St. George) and Mill Creek (near Moab) as a part of a water quality investigation. Elevated mercury levels were found in six of eight largemouth bass collected from Gunlock Reservoir and three of five brown trout collected from Mill Creek. Bluegills and channel catfish from Gunlock were also tested but did not show elevated mercury levels.

Officials from the Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Utah Department of Health, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Southeastern Utah District Health Department and

Southwest Utah Public Health Department worked in partnership to issue this advisory.

Information about the advisory will also be distributed locally, and will be available at: http://www.deq.utah.gov/issues/Mercury/fish_advisories.htm and each of the agencies' Internet sites. More information about the health effects of mercury can be found at: <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/tfacts46.html>. A map of Utah highlighting the sites where fish were tested for mercury and the tests results can be found at: http://www.waterquality.utah.gov/documents/mercury_sample_sites_5-17-05.pdf. 217 samples of fish tissue were taken throughout the state and only 18 samples had elevated mercury levels.

Mercury levels will continue to be monitored. Advisories will be updated, as needed, based on additional information.

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